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NOTES AND COMMENTS.

I.

A POSSIBLE WAR AND ITS PROBABLE RESULTS.

NO ONE anticipates a war between Great Britain and this country. Certainly no one desires it except the fanatics, who, inspired by race hate, would gladly transfer the Anglo-Irish quarrel to this continent. The common interests of the two nations are too solidly one to permit violation except for the gravest reasons. The fate which

"Their severance ruled,
And bade between their shores to be
The unplumbed, salt, estranging sea,"

also joined them by chords which ring out through the whole diapason the same aspirations and the same responsibilities in the evolution of history. A war between these two nations would be a dire calamity to each, no matter how it might result. Yet newspapers and individuals, high in national influence, have been calmly forecasting such a contingency. Let us then take our place with these speculators on so woeful a chance. We shall find the more remote results far weightier than the immediate.

The latter may be estimated as, firstly, either the destruction of our most important seaboard cities, or their salvation through the payment of an enormous tribute; secondly, the subjugation of Canada by the United States; thirdly, the destruction of British commerce by American privateers and letters of marque. If the nations pressed the war in dead earnest all these results would come about, no matter what the earlier vicissitudes might be. Canada is fast ripening to drop into the mouth of her big-neighbor. The silent forces which mould the destiny of peoples, are working inexorably to this result. War would only hasten this a quarter or maybe a half century. The evils of a violent seizure by the United States, however, would be terrible to the mother-country, while a peaceful secession of Canada from Great Britain would rather strengthen than weaken that great people.

Imprimis as to Great Britain. The loss of so great a possession by war, though in no sense is it a factor of real strength, even since the completion of the Canada Pacific road, would be a fatal blow to English military prestige. England's great interests throughout the world, specially in India, would shake to the centre with such a stroke. She is probably the best-hated nation on this footstool of God, though we think it her misfortune rather than her fault. The military glory of this nation is rather reflected from her past than existent in her present. Her own most competent critics pronounce her army to be a glittering sham. Even her

navy, great as it is, is far less effective than the roster on paper would show. A thorough exposure of England's weakness would make her empire totter, and nothing would so conduce to this end as one great defeat.

Secondly, as to the United States: Victory in such a war would be almost worse than defeat. It would certainly foster our warlike spirit and tend to transform us into a great military nation, which now we essentially are not. The lust of aggrandizement would poison our blood. The military possibilities of such a nation as this, once its energies were turned in this direction, can hardly be computed. We should hanker after fresh conquests. Mexico and Central America would ultimately feed our maw, and the American Republic would stretch from the frozen zone nearly to the Equator. Such a united dominion, including interests so hostile and irreconcilable, could not last under a republican form. The centrifugal forces would be irresistible. Final end—monarchy or the cleaving apart into a dozen fresh fragments, either case accompanied by the terrors of civil war.

Such would be probable results of a war with Great Britain if it were fought to the bitter end. The effect on the interests of the civilized world at large, though more indirect, would seriously retard them in their onward march. Anglo-Saxon pride does not harbor a false conceit in believing that in the harmonious action of the English-speaking peoples the world's prosperity largely hangs.

G. T. FERRIS.

II.

RESTRICTION OR PROHIBITION ?

SEVEN distinguished men, in the August number, discuss the drink evil and the question of prohibition. They all agree as to the magnitude of the evil, and that, if the manufacture and sale of intoxicants was stopped, the evil would cease. Thus far, every intelligent and candid man must agree with them. But is not that the position of doctrinaires, dealing with an ideal race, and an ideal world, rather than the treatment of the subject by statesmen, who have an actual world and a wicked race to deal with? To my apprehension, it does not touch the core of the subject.

While it is hardly possible to exaggerate the magnitude of the evil, and is an axiom that the evil would cease if it was impossible to procure the means of the indulgence, yet the fact is that, in most states and nations, prohibition at present is an impossibility. The practical question, therefore, is, what then is to be done? Neal Dow is the only one of the seven who attempts to answer that question. He says: "If we cannot have it forbidden and suppressed we will not consent that it shall have legal permission or protection. Whatever evil to society may come from it, let it be without sanction of the State." In other words, if the manufacture and sale of ardent spirits cannot be prohibited by law, let the manufacture and sale be open and free to everybody, absolutely unregulated, and unrestricted, and no law take cognizance of its existence as a fact in the life of the community.

Is that the course which wisdom dictates? Is it the course which we pursue with other recognized nuisances? If we cannot prevent them, do we not do what we can to throw obstacles in their way to obstruct them, to diminish their power? And is not this the course of wisdom? If so, then it is plain that in all cases where prohibition cannot be enacted, restriction is the true policy. If grogeries are an evil, the more of them the worse for the community—the fewer the better. And, in such a case, it is an abuse of language to call that "permission" which is a restriction. We do not "permit" that which we have no power to prevent. Mr.